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GERARD JONES EDUARDO BARRETO

MARTIAN Manhunter™

american secrets

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"LIZARD-MEN"? DETECTIVE JONES, THAT'S COMIC-BOOK STUFF.
YOU COULD SAY THAT ABOUT DR. MID-NITE JUST AS WELL, BUT THAT'S WHO YOU CLAIM TO BE.
BRAM
AND HAVE YOU MET ANYONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE A LIZARD-MAN?
NO. BUT I'VE SEEN THEM. SEEN MEN'S HERDS TURN TO LIZARD-HERDS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
THEN YOU'RE A VICTIM, DETECTIVE JONES. A VICTIM OF ONE OF THE STRANGEST MASS HALLUCINATIONS OF OUR VERY STRANGE TIMES.

WHAT'S HE MEAN, "HALLUNATION"? IS HE GIVIN' WE DIDN'T SEE WHAT WE SEEN?
BUT WE DID SEE, DR. MENIDER! MY MOTHER ALMOST GAVE ME TO THE LIZARDS!
BE CALM. CLOSE YOUR EYES. TRAVEL ON MY WORDS.
LET ME CARRY YOU BACK, TO A TIME OF MYSTERY AND LEGEND, TO A TIME THAT'S BARELY TWENTY YEARS PAST, YET SEEMS UNREACHABLY REMOTE.
A TIME OF TOWERING HEROES AND TOWERING MADMEN, OF DEPRESSION AND BOUNDLESS OPTIMISM, OF GATHERING WAR, BUT WAR WITHOUT THE ATOM.
IN THAT TIME, WE EMERGED.
THROUGH THE MOST BIZARRE AND IMPLAUSIBLE EVENTS A NEW RACE OF HUMANKIND EMERGED. A MAN BREATHES THE GASSES FROM "HEAVY WATER" AND HE CAN RUN LIKE THE WIND.
AN ENGINEER LIFTS A LANTERN AND IS GIVEN A MAGIC RING. A YOUNGSTER SPEAKS A MAGIC WORD AND RIDES A LIGHTNING BOLT.
IN MY CASE, A DOCTOR IS BLINDED BY A HAND GRENADE AND FINDS HE CAN SEE IN UTTER DARKNESS. HE DEVELOPS LENSES TO SEE IN THE LIGHT, THEN DONS A COSTUME AND GOES OUT TO FIGHT CRIME.
IT SOUNDS INSANE.
NOW IT DOES, YES. BUT NOW IS NOW. AND THEN...
...WAS THEN.

STRANGEST OF ALL, NO SOONER HAD WE EMERGED THAN OPPONENTS ROSE UP TO MEET US.
HUNDREDS OF THEM. MONSTERS AND GHOSTS, THIEVES IN STRANGE COSTUMES AND SCIENTISTS BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION.
WHY HAD THERE NEVER BEEN SUCH BEFORE? WERE THEY CREATED BY THE SAME CONDITIONS THAT CREATED US?
OR DID WE SOMEHOW CALL THEM FORTH, AS NECESSARY COUNTERPARTS?
THAT BECAME MY THEORY, A THEORY SUPPORTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE F.B.I.
I JUST MET AN AGENT OF THE F.B.I. HE TURNED INTO A LIZARD.
OH, DEAR. THIS WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN I THOUGHT.
THIS IS WHY THERE ARE NO MORE OF US STILL ACTIVE IN THE WORLD!
DIRECTOR HOOVER AND I AGREED THAT WE "HEROES" HAD SOMEHOW SPRUNG FROM AND EMBODIED A SPIRIT OF NATIONAL TERROR...
AND SUMMONED UP A DARK SIDE, IN THE BODIES OF OUR FOES, THAT ENABLED US TO EXORCISE A NATION'S TERROR THROUGH BIZARRE AND REPETITIVE COMBAT.
WE SERVED OUR PURPOSE IN THAT TIME OF TERROR. BUT, AS THE DIRECTOR WARNED, TO CONTINUE OUR ACTIONS WOULD CONTINUE THE TERROR.
IT'S BEEN A DIFFERENT WORLD SINCE THE WAR. IT'S TIME FOR A NEW BREED OF HERO.
THE DOCTOR. THE POLICEMAN. THE INSURANCE MAN. THE FATHER.

AND THE DIRECTOR'S WISDOM WAS BORNE OUT BY WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE CHOSE TO CONTINUE AFTER THE WAR.
HYSTERIA.
SUDDENLY AMERICANS WERE SEEING FLYING SAUCERS, FEARING THE BREAKDOWN OF THIS MAGNIFICENT SOCIETY, IMAGINING A "MAFIA."
DIRECTOR HOOVER IS VERY EXPLICIT ABOUT THAT: THERE IS NO "MAFIA."
JUST AS THERE ARE NO "COMMUNIST CONSPIRACIES" IN OUR GOVERNMENT.
THAT'S THE FEAR THAT OUR ENEMIES WANT US TO SUFFER.
WHAT ENEMIES?
THE COMMUNISTS
BUT YOU JUST SAID THAT FEAR OF COMMUNISTS WAS--
THAT'S THE POINT!
"RED SCARE" HYSTERIA IS A COMMUNIST PLOY! AND DEMAGOGUES LIKE SENATOR McCARTHY WERE COMMUNIST PUPES!
THIS IS INSANE!
YOU COME HERE PROMISING EXPLANATIONS AND YOU TALK IN CIRCLES!
OUR FEARS ARE FALSE, CREATED BY THE PEOPLE WE FEAR SO WE WON'T FEAR WHAT WE SHOULD FEAR--WHICH IS THEM?
THIS IS MOSS-WASH!
YOU JUST DON'T WANT US TO TRUST WHAT WE SEE!
NO, DETECTIVE! I JUST WANT YOU TO SERVE THE RIGHT SIDE. YOUR GOVERNMENT NEEDS YOU.
IT NEEDS ALL THE MARTIANS IT CAN GET

MY EYES ARE GOOD FOR MORE THAN THE DARK, DETECTIVE.
SINCE THE JUSTICE SOCIETY RETIRED, I'VE BEEN HELPING OUR F.B.I. TO IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT "EXTRAORDINARY INDIVIDUALS." SUCH AS YOU.
IT'S THE SAME WITH ALL OUR "RETIREMENTS." THE OFFICIAL STORY IS THAT WE GAVE UP OUR CRIME-FIGHTING TO AVOID BEING UNMASKED BY A RED-BAITING CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE.
THAT WAS OUR CALCULATED LITTLE BLOW AGAINST THE RED SCARE.
IN TRUTH, WE'VE ALL BEEN SERVING OUR COUNTRY IN QUIET, INVISIBLE WAYS, THE WAY EVERY GOOD AMERICAN SHOULD.
BEATING OUR SUPER-POWERS INTO TRACT HOMES, AS IT WERE.
WHY, HECK, IF THE GOVERNMENT COULDN'T FIND A USE FOR POWERS LIKE OURS, THEY'D PROBABLY HAVE TO KILL US!
HA HA.
F.B.I. AGENTS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO YOUR ROOM, JONES. THEY KNOW YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR POWER OF FLIGHT, YOUR SHAPE-CHANGING.
THEY WANT TO FIND A LOOSE FOR YOUR ABILITIES.
"YOU MEAN WE CAN FIGHT LIZARD-HEADED MONSTERS FOR THE F.B.I., SIR?
OH, DEAR.
BUT DOCTOR--WILL WE BE ABLE TO STAY WITH OFFICER JONES?
NO, HONEY.
OUR GOVERNMENT HAS WONDERFUL PROGRAMS FOR CIVIC-MINDED CHILDREN LIKE YOU, AND FOR ENTERTAINERS LIKE MR. PRESTON HERE.
BUT FOR PEOPLE LIKE THE DETECTIVE AND ME ...

...THEY HAVE A SPECIAL PROGRAM.
THE F.B.I. IS ON ITS WAY, JONES. IF YOU DON'T HELP THEM, THEY'LL DO WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
WELL, THEN...
...ZOPRBETIE!
12
WHAT?
HM? OH. JUST A LITTLE JOKE PHRASE WE USED TO TOSS AROUND WITH OUR OLD LEGAL PAL, MELVIN KEENE. QUITE A FELLOW, THAT MELVIN.
I'VE MET HIM.
I KNOW. WE HEAR ABOUT THESE THINGS.
WE OLD J.S.A.'ERS LOOK OUT FOR MELVIN. TRY TO SEE THAT HE DOESN'T GET INTO TROUBLE WITH THAT SILLY MAGAZINE OF HIS.
AND SO I SAY, ZOPRBETIE, DETECTIVE JONES.
ZOPRBETIE.

LIES.
BUT LIES SO BIG AND UGLY THAT HE HAD TO KNOW I'D SPOT THEM.
"NO MAFIA."
THE KIND OF LIES GOVERNMENT COULD TRY TO PULL OFF.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, OFFICER JONES? I DON'T WANT TO BE IN ANY PROGRAM! I WANT TO BE WITH YOU!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, PATTY.
I JUST KNOW WE CAN'T LET THE F.B.I. TAKE US.
BUT WHERE DO WE GO? WE'VE BEEN RUNNING AND RUNNING! I'M TIRED OF RUNNING! YOU SAID WE COULD STOP!
I THOUGHT I COULD TRICK THEM, NEGOTIATE SOMETHING WITH THEM.
BUT THEIR NEGOTIATIONS COULD MAKE PRISONERS OF US -- SLAVES OF US!
BUT IT'S THE F.B.I.! THEY CAN'T BE BAD!
PERKINS -- YOU BELIEVED YOUR PER MAN. YOU BELIEVED IN LEAVITZVILLE. BOTH NEARLY GOT YOU KILLED!
YOU CAN'T BELIEVE --
KNOCK
KNOCK
DETECTIVE JONES? THIS IS THE F.B.I.

WE'RE HERE!
NO, PERKINS!
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, DETECTIVE. I TRUST DR. McNIDER HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT YOU SHOULD HELP US.
ESPECIALLY YOU, LITTLE PATTY MARIE!
DON'T LET HIM GET ME, OFFICER JONES!
THEY WON'T HURT US, PATTY MARIE! THEY'RE THE GOVERNMENT!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT WE LIKE TO HEAR, YOUNG MAN. NOW WHY DON'T YOU STEP OUT IN THE HALL AND WE'LL DISCUSS WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR F.B.I.
THANK YOU, SIR!
PERKINS!
IT'S NICE TO SEE SOMEONE WITH A SENSE OF CIVIC DUTY.
HOW'S YOUR CIVIC DUTY, DETECTIVE JONES?
HOLD ON, PATTY!

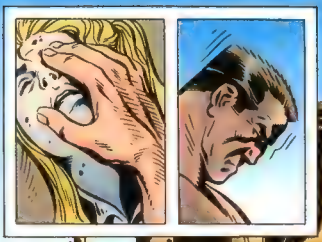
NO, YOU DON'T!
I'VE GOT PLANS FOR THIS LITTLE GIRL!
NO! OFFICER JONES!
AAAAAAAA

AGAIN
COST US PRETTY HEAVILY THIS TIME TOO
TOO BAD
..HE WAS SUCH A GOOD LITTLE BOY
NO MORE SUBTLE MEASURES
THIS IS ANGLE TELL EDWARDS.. SCRAMBLE!
VWRROARR

WHERE WILL WE GO, OFFICER JONES?
ANYPLACE WHERE THEY CAN'T TRACK US
WHICH MAY BE NO PLACE
EVEN THE SKY
BOGIE SIGHTED SIX O'CLOCK
LAUNCH INCENDIARIES

THERE'S NO SAFETY IN THE OPEN SKY.
FG 711
AIR FORCE
USAF
ONLY UP AGAINST THE BREAST OF DEATH
COL. STEVE CANIFF
CAN'T FIRE WITHOUT HITTING EAGLE 8.
ORDERS ARE TO HIT THE TARGET AT ANY COST
FIRE
FIRE.
FIRE!
USAF
NO SAFETY EVEN AGAINST THE PLANE
MAYBE ONLY
WHOOM!
THROUGH THE PLANE

FIRE
EVEN THIS FAR FROM HER IT BURNS ME
HELP ME! CATCH ME!
CLOSER IT COULD KILL ME
THE FIRE
THE FIRE



I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

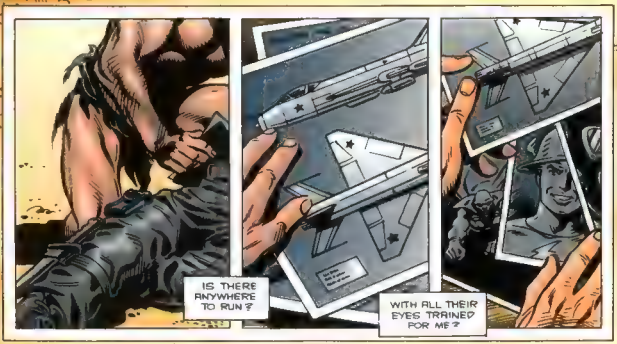
SOMEWHERE BEFORE I'VE SEEN CHILDREN KILLED AND BEEN LEFT ALONE ON A DEAD WORLD

SEEN CHILDREN DEVOURED ON A FUNERAL PYRE AND LEARNED TO FEAR THE FLAMES

AGAIN I'M A SPECK IN THE DESERT

BLOOD ON THE SNOW

WITH THE FIERY EYE OF THE WORLD LOOKING DOWN ON ME.



IS THERE ANYWHERE TO RUN?

WITH ALL THEIR EYES TRAINED FOR ME?

THEIR EYES SEE EVERY-THING
AND OURS?
THEY SEE LIZARDS.
IS THIS YOUR "PRIZE-TO-BE," PATTY? YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF WITH THE LIZARDS
BAHAMAS
CAYMAN ISLANDS
SANTIAGO DE CUBA
I'M SORRY, HON. MAYBE THIS IS JUST WHAT COMES FOR THE ONES LIKE US, THE ONES WHO CAN SEE
WHO ARE WE? YOU AND ME AND PERKINS AND MCNIDER? DO WE SEE WHAT THE REST DON'T?
OR ARE THE OTHERS JUST HAPPIER WITH THEIR MOUTHS SHUT?
WHAT WAS MCNIDER TELLING ME? HE WAS WRAPPING THE TRUTH IN HIS LIES, WASN'T HE? THE ANSWER IS THERE -- BUT CAN I SEE IT?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, FLY-BOY?
YOU'RE NO LIZARD. WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT--
CAYMAN ISLANDS
FUNGUS

FUNGUS LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN ON THIS PLANET, WRAPPED ALONG HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM
WHY? SO HE WON'T SEE? OR SO HE'LL CATCH FIRE IF HE TRIES TO TALK?
I'M SORRY, PATTY.
NONE OF IT GROWS IN HER.
MAYBE SOME ARE IMMUNE. MAYBE IT TAKES TIME IN CHILDREN. MAYBE IT HASN'T REACHED PERKINS' HILL COUNTRY YET. I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT DO I KNOW?
PIECES. LIES THAT POINT TO TRUTHS.
IS THAT WHY YOU COULDN'T TELL ME, MCNIDER? KEENE? DOES THIS STUFF TWIST THROUGH YOUR NERVES?
IS THAT WHY YOU TALK IN SIGNS?
YOU GAVE ME ALL THE PIECES, DIDN'T YOU, MCNIDER? I JUST CAN'T PUT THEM TOGETHER.
BROOOOOMM

READ THE SIGNS.
READ THE SIGNS.
CUBA
WHY DOES IT KEEP COMING UP? WHY DOES IT.
OLD BAHAMAS CHA
SANTA MARIA
CAIBARIEN
PTO IBEREZ
MORON
LAS VILLAS
CAMAGUEY
HUCURO
VERTIENTE
"PRIZE TO BE
HABANA
"PRIZE TO BE"
"POETRI B Z"
BETO EZ RIP"
ZOPR
EZ RIP"
ZOPRBETIE
PTO. IBEREZ

HAVANA
CASINO
BLACK JACK
EL REY DEL MAMB
HOY
¡¡LA B
CUBA

CONGA BAR
A LONG DRIFT DOWN THE COLORADO RIVER, THEN FLIGHT THROUGH THE HILLS OF MEXICO AND A STINT AS A CUBAN SAILOR ACROSS THE GULF.
WHERE I FIND THE STRENGTH TO KEEP GOING I DON'T KNOW, UNLESS IT'S THE RUM AND THE CONGA
I ASK QUESTIONS, NOT TOO DIRECT TO BRING THE LIZARD-DOGS SNIFFING, BUT DIRECT ENOUGH TO GET QUICK ANSWERS.
I MAY NOT HAVE TIME FOR SUBTLETY.
ANSWERS: CUBA'S A COUNTRY RUN BY GANGSTERS, ON AMERICAN MONEY.
THERE ARE REBELS IN THE HILLS, BETWEEN HERE AND PUERTO IBEREZ. THEY'RE POISED TO STRIKE HAVANA ...
...BUT THERE ARE RUMORS OF A COUNTERATTACK COMING SOON
BAR
¡CAMILO VIVE!
A BIG ONE

MR. GIOCONDA'S MEN ARE RUNNING WEAPONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS. "STARWARS" WEAPONS," I'M TOLD.
OTHER PINGWERS DON'T COME
"PUERTO IBEREZ"? I DON'T KNOW SUCH A PLACE
"IBEREZ"?
"IBEREZ"?
NO.. NO..
"IBEREZ"?!
NO! NO IBEREZ! NO IBEREZ!

Club Mona Lisa
Tonight! Hoy! Teen Sensation
PERKINS PRESTON!
First Cuban Engagement!
¡¡POR PRIMERA VEZ EN CUBA!!
IBEREZ... IBEREZ...
A VERY POETIC SOUND, DON'T YOU THINK?
DO YOU KNOW IT?
I KNOW ALL AND I KNOW NOTHING.
I'M ONLY A POOR POET, BUFFETTED FROM PORT TO PORT, CARE TO BUY?
POEMAS
1 PESO C/U
"POEMS QUARTER EACH." WHEN DID I HEAR THAT?
AT THE BEGINNING
"I HAVE BEEN..."

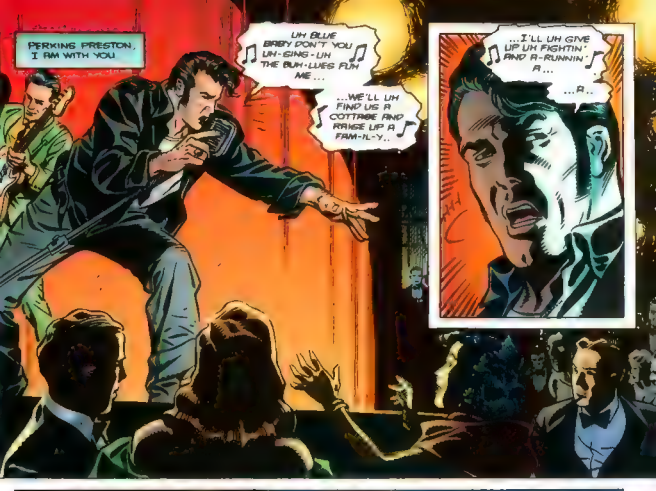
YOU WROTE THIS, MUH? I MET A FUNNY LITTLE MAN IN NEW YORK WHO SAID THE SAME.
THE TRUTH IS WRITTEN BY MANY PEOPLE IN MANY PLACES
POETRY IS THE TRUTH?
POETRY BE EASY
BUT IT'S AS NEAR AS WE CAN GET
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PUERTO IBEREZ?

"EZ" IS THE OLD MOORISH-SPANISH PATRONYMIC. THUS "IBEREZ" WOULD MEAN "SON OF IBERO." NO SUCH NAME
"IBERO," HOWEVER, DOES MEAN "FROM IBERIA," WHICH IS TRUE OF ALL LATIN AMERICA, OF COURSE
NOT THE FLESH OF LATIN AMERICA, BUT ITS SHAPE!
WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT IBEREZ?

"LOS IBEROS"! GREAT VOYAGERS. GREAT CONQUERORS. GREAT ARTISTS OF THE ORGANIC!
A PEOPLE WHO CROSSED A VAST GULF, CAME LIKE GODS TO COLONIZE, TO PLANT, TO SHAPE!
TO SHAPE.
AND WHY HASN'T ANY-ONE HEARD OF IBEREZ?
SOMETIMES THE BIGGEST THINGS ARE FORGOTTEN MOST QUICKLY. IF FORGETFUL-NESS IS WELCOME.
CUBA IS AN ISLAND, ISOLATED AND ALONE
YOU'RE ALL ISLANDS ON THIS PLANET

SO WE REACH TO CROSS OUR NINETY MILES OF PLONENESS. AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE LINK CUBA TO THE WORLD
IN HER DARK INTERIOR VALLEYS THE HORTICULTURE IS RICH
I'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT HORTI-CULTURE
HORTICULTURE IS THE GROWING OF SMALL CROPS IN SMALL PLOTS. IT IS THE TENDING OF EACH LITTLE GROWTH. IT UNITES PEOPLE IN EFFORT AND IT FEEDS.
IT FEEDS. IT FEEDS.
AND NOW, I'M AFRAID I'VE TALKED TOO MUCH IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BURN FOR THAT AN-CIENT COMMUNION WITH THE NIGHT.'

I AM WITH YOU IN CUBA, AND ON THE ROADS OF AMERICA AND THE STREETS OF NEW YORK
I AM WITH YOU, AND MELVIN KEENE, AND ALL OF YOU WHO SEE THE TRUTH BUT CANNOT SPEAK IT BECAUSE OF THAT TERRIBLE HORTICULTURE OF YOUR CONQUERORS, THAT FUNGUS IN YOUR BRAIN
I AM WITH EVERY ONE OF YOU WHO HAS BEEN BLINDED, FIVE AND EVERY ONE WHO RISKED THAT BURNING BY SENDING CODED MESSAGES OF THE TRUTH
THE TRUTH OF THE SHAPE-SHIFTING CONQUERORS WHO CAME TO EARTH DURING THE TERROR OF WAR, WHO USED THAT TERROR TO INFILTRATE GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS CARTELS, TO SPRING THE SLEEP OF SAMENESS OVER THIS BOILING, FERTILE WORLD
THE TRUTH BENT INTO STRANGE NEW SHAPES BY PROFIT-EERS AND POWER-MANDLERS, WILLING TO LIE DOWN WITH LIZARDS WHETHER THEY COULD SEE THEM OR NOT
I AM WITH YOU THE DEFENDERS AND THE VICTIMS OF THE TRUTH I AM WITH THE MURDERED, THE FRIGHTENED AND THE POOLED


PERKINS PRESTON, I AM WITH YOU.
UH BLUE BABY DON'T YOU UH-SING-UH THE BUH-LUES FUH ME...
...WE'LL UH FIND US A COTTAGE AND RAISE UP A FAM-IL-Y...
...I'LL UH GIVE UP UH FIGHTIN' AND A-RUNNIN' A...
...A..

THEN YOU CAN SEE ME, PRESTON?
GOOD
I NEED A MAN WHO CAN SEE.
DETECTIVE JONES ? BUT.. BUT
QUE ?
MR GIOCONDA ?
ALERT THE MASTER GARDENER!

BOOM
SEÑOR CASTRO
EDUARDO BARRETO 01-02
DO YOU KNOW PUERTO IBEREZ? DO YOU HAVE THE MILITARY POWER TO SEIZE IT?
WHO ARE YOU? YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE JOURNALISTS
WHAT ARE YOU FIGHTING FOR, SEÑOR CASTRO?
THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS! TO THROW OUT THE DICTATOR! TO GIVE CUBA BACK TO THE CUBANS!
WHY WOULD I ATTACK PUERTO IBEREZ?
THEY SAY YOUR STRATEGY IS TO CLOSE IN ON HAVANA BUT THAT'S THE STRATEGY THEY WANT YOU TO FOLLOW
THEY FIND YOUR GUERRILLA WAR USEFUL TO DISTRACT FROM THEIR REAL PLANS
TO DISTRACT FROM IBEREZ
IT'S A TRAP, FIDEL! THEY'RE C.I.A.! OUR PEOPLE HAVE NEVER COME OUT OF IBEREZ ALIVE! IT'S--
YOUR LITTLE ARMY MAY BEAT BATISTA
WHAT WILL IT DO AGAINST AN INVASION FROM BEYOND THE EARTH?
NO
PTO IBEREZ 5 KM
BOOM

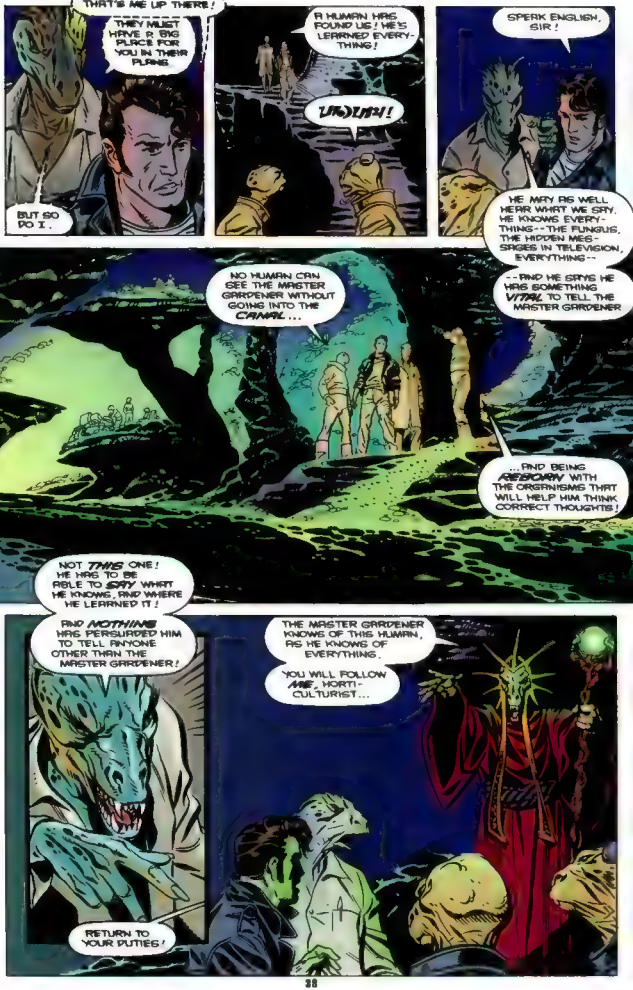
THESE FOLKS... THEY'RE NOT COMMUNISTS, ARE THEY, DETECTIVE JONES?
COMMUNISTS AND WHAT ARE THEY? BEINGS WHO LIVE THROUGH THE GROUP -- AND NOT THEMSELVES? IS THIS BASEBALL PLAYING WARRIOR, THIS SELF-ASSIGNED SAVIOR A COMMUNIST?
BWOOM
BWOOM
THERE ARE NO COMMUNISTS ON THIS WORLD.
THERE WERE ON MINE.
THEY'RE ALL DEAD NOW
AND WHAT ARE YOU, YOU SARPENTERS OF A WORLD? WHAT CROP ARE YOU GROWING IN PUERTO IBEREZ? WHAT MONOTONOUS LOW-MOWED FUTURE ARE YOU TENDING FOR MANKIND?
AND WHY?
KRAK
YOU'VE PLAYED ON THE FEARS AND CONFLICTS OF THIS WORLD. NOW I'VE LEARNED THE SAME TRICK
NOW I'VE SCARED A GROUP OF MEN INTO A SUICIDAL STRIKE, JUST TO BUY A QUICK DISTRACTION, JUST TO SNARL YOUR DEFENSES AROUND IBEREZ..
I MAY HAVE ONLY MINUTES TO MAKE IT PAY
TO FIND YOUR HEART AND STRIKE.

KRAK KRAK BOOM
BOOM

OH!
ARE YOU A HUMAN? A REAL ONE? HOW CAN YOU BE HERE?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE DOING? TURNING PEOPLE INTO PLANTS?
I'VE BEEN HELPING YOU--HAVEN'T I, SIR? I'VE BEEN SENDING MESSAGES IN MY SONGS--MESSAGES YOU WANT YOUNG FOLKS TO HEAR!
YOU MADE MY SONGS INTO HITS--DIDN'T YOU?
IF YOU KNOW THIS MUCH, YOU MUST BE ONE OF THE CHOSEN! AND THAT MEANS I DON'T DARE KILL YOU.
WHAT DO I DO WITH YOU? WHAT WOULD THE MASTER GARDENER WANT?
WHY? ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE THE KIDS DANCE! WHAT'S YOUR MASTER GARDENER DOING WITH ME, SIR?
I...DON'T KNOW. THE OTHERS KNOW ABOUT THE CULTIVATION OF HUMAN CULTURE. I ONLY KNOW...HORTI-CULTURE.
HWOOOO
OUR TROOPS--LEAVING THE CAVERN! SOMETHING MUST BE VERY WRONG, VERY--
HWOOOOO

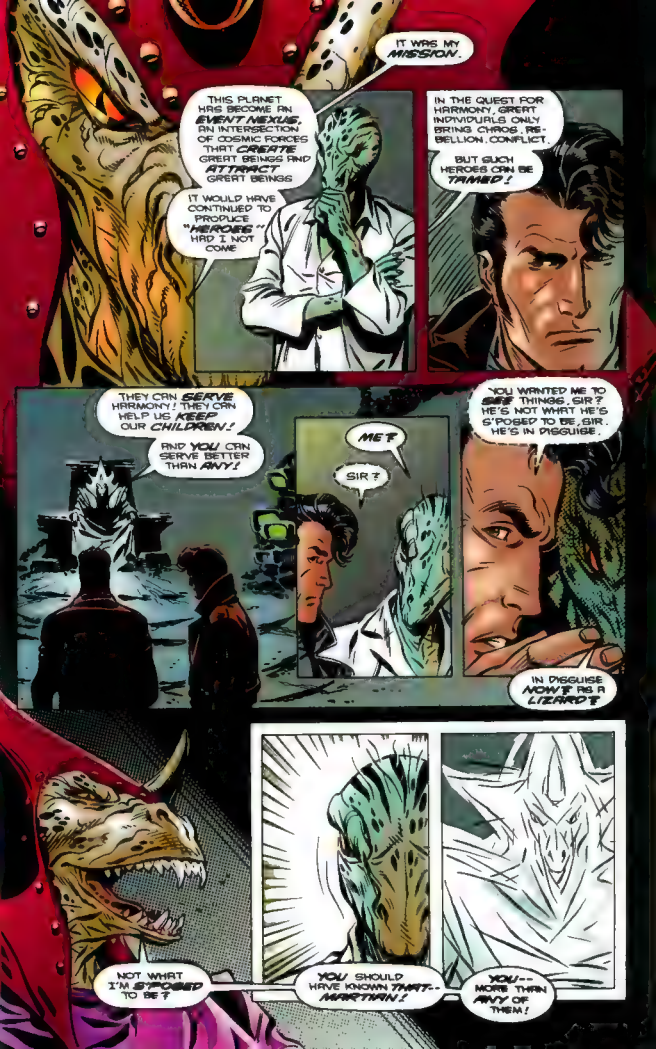
NOW WE'LL LEARN HOW WELL THEY CAN SEE
THE "DOGS WHO SEE INSIDE"
HWOOOOO
THEY MAY FIND A GUERRILLA IN THE HILLS. THEY MAY FIND A PRINTER IN GREENWICH VILLAGE WHO SOMEHOW RESISTS THE FUNGUS
BUT I AM SOMETHING THEY CAN'T SEE INSIDE
WHY ?
WHY HERVE THEY FAILED TO CATCH ME...
.. EVEN NOW ?
EVEN HERVE ?

EVEN IN THE DEN OF THE "MASTER GARDENER."
EVEN IN THE HOTHOUSE WHERE THE FRUITS OF THE AMERICAN MIND ARE STUNTED...
...AND NEW STRAINS ARE BRED TO FILL A HUNGRY AMERICAN SOUL.
--A NEW GENERATION--
--BROUGHT TO YOU BY--
--OO!--
--UH UH FAM-IL-Y--
--THE COMFORT AND SAFETY OF--
THE MARTIAN IS BEHIND THIS! HE'S IN CUSH! FIND HIM! FIND HIM!
THE MASTER SEES ALL ELSE MUST WAIT--UNTIL WE FIND THAT MARTIAN!
BUT AGAIN...
...WHY?


THAT'S ME UP THERE!
THEY MUST HAVE A BIG PLACE FOR YOU IN THEIR PLANS.
BUT SO DO I.
A HUMAN HAS FOUND US! HE'S LEARNED EVERYTHING!
UH-UH!
SPEAK ENGLISH, SIR!
HE MAY AS WELL HEAR WHAT WE SAY. HE KNOWS EVERYTHING--THE FUNGUS, THE HIDDEN MESSAGES IN TELEVISION, EVERYTHING--
--AND HE SAYS HE HAS SOMETHING VITAL TO TELL THE MASTER GARDENER
NO HUMAN CAN SEE THE MASTER GARDENER WITHOUT GOING INTO THE CAMMIL...
...AND BEING REBORN WITH THE ORGANISMS THAT WILL HELP HIM THINK CORRECT THOUGHTS!
NOT THIS ONE! WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SPY WHAT HE KNOWS, AND WHERE HE LEARNED IT!
AND NOTHING HAS PERSUADED HIM TO TELL ANYONE OTHER THAN THE MASTER GARDENER!
THE MASTER GARDENER KNOWS OF THIS HUMAN, AS HE KNOWS OF EVERYTHING.
YOU WILL FOLLOW ME, HORTICULTURIST...
RETURN TO YOUR DUTIES!

ALONG THE CANAL
AS THE MASTER GARDENER WISHES. BUT LET THE HUMAN KNOW WE ARE CALLING THE TROOPS
AND ANY WRONG BEHAVIOR WILL EARN HIM THE FIRE.
FIRE
THE WORD MAKES MY FLESH BURN.
AND I LOOK IN THE CANAL. SO COOL.
SO DARK.
SO TEEMING WITH LIFE.
IT CALLS TO ME, STRANGELY, LIKE THESE DARK, COOL CHAMBERS OF SENTIENT FUNGUS CALL TO ME
LIKE AN ECHO OF MY LOST LIFE.
THE HUMAN, MASTER GARDENER
THE HUMAN. THE ONE WHO WANTS TO SEE WHO RESHAPES HIS SPECIES.
HE SHOULD DO MORE.
HE SHOULD SHOW ME HIS GRATITUDE.

GRATITUDE THAT I CROSSED THE STARRY GULF TO BRING HIS COMPETITIVE, CONFLICT-RIDDEN WORLD TOGETHER...
...IN PERFECT PEACE, SERENITY, EQUALITY, AND ORDER.
YOU'RE SAYIN' YOU DID THIS FOR OUR GOOD, SIR?
I'VE GIVEN YOU LEAVITTZVILLE! I'VE GIVEN YOU SKEETERS!
I'VE SHOWN YOU HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN!
ALL I ASK IN RETURN IS THAT YOU GIVE ME A PLACE TO END MY LONELY WANDERINGS THROUGH THE STARS...
...A PLACE TO CALL HOMME.
THE HUMAN WANTS TO KNOW HOW YOU CAN MAKE HIS PEOPLE HAPPY AGAINST THEIR WILL.
"AGAINST THEIR WILL"?
DON'T THEY LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHEN THEY SEE THE TRUTH? DON'T THEY SETTLE FOR THE HAPPY PICTURES I GIVE THEM OF WHAT LIFE SHOULD BE?
THEY FEEL SAFE SO LONG AS THERE ARE WARRIORS IN THE SKY TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE EVIL "OTHER."
THE WARRIORS IN THE JETS ABOVE US...WHOM I CONTROL.
THEY FEEL CONTENT SO LONG AS I FEED THEM A SIMPLE PICTURE OF THE WORLD.
OH, SOMETIMES A SUBVERSIVE NEWSMAN WILL TRY TO CLUE THEM IN THAT SOMETHING IS AWOOMS. PERHAPS WITH SOME OBVIOUS "SLIP" ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE.
WHICH IS WHY WE UNDERMINE THEIR FAITH IN THE TRUTH!
OUR QUIZ SHOWS REDUCE TRUTH TO BITS OF ENTERTAINING INFORMATION! WE TEACH THEM TO MEMORIZE RATHER THAN THINK!
YOU SAY THAT AS IF YOU JUST REALIZED IT, HORTICULTURIST.
BUT YOU KNOW HOW EASY IT IS TO TRAIN THE MASSES. THE ARTISTS ARE HARDER, AND THE HEROES.
THEY HAD TO BE MANIPULATED. DEALS HAD TO BE MADE, WITH SUBVERSIVES LIKE KEENE.
BUT...IF YOU WANT FOLKS TO BE HAPPY... WHY'D YOU WANT TO GET RID OF HEROES?


IT WAS MY MISSION.
THIS PLANET HAS BECOME AN EVENT NEXUS, AN INTERSECTION OF COSMIC FORCES THAT CREATE GREAT BEINGS AND ATTRACT GREAT BEINGS.
IT WOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO PRODUCE "HEROES" HAD I NOT COME.
IN THE QUEST FOR HARMONY, GREAT INDIVIDUALS ONLY BRING CHAOS, REBELLION, CONFLICT.
BUT SUCH HEROES CAN BE TAMED!
THEY CAN SERVE HARMONY! THEY CAN HELP US KEEP OUR CHILDREN!
AND YOU CAN SERVE BETTER THAN ANY!
ME?
SIR?
YOU WANTED ME TO SEE THINGS, SIR? HE'S NOT WHAT HE'S S'POSED TO BE, SIR. HE'S IN PRIGUISE.
IN DISGUISE NOW? AS A LIZARD?
NOT WHAT I'M S'POSED TO BE?
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT-- MARTIAN!
YOU-- MORE THAN ANY OF THEM!

HAVEN'T YOU WONDERED WHY MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO KILL YOU?
I WAS THE MASTER GARDENER OF MARS!
BUT ALL MY KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANISMS COULDN'T STOP THE SPREAD OF THE MICROBES THAT [redacted] OUR CHILDREN!
MY KNOWLEDGE KEPT ME ALIVE, RAGE AFTER RAGE, ENCLOSED IN MY LONELINESS, HAUNTED BY THE FUNERAL PYRES OF MY BABIES.
THEN THE LIZARD MEN CAME. LONELY, ISOLATED LIZARD MEN.
I MADE THEM THINK I WAS THEIR LOST FATHER-GOD. I USED MY HORTICULTURE TO GIVE THEM NEW THOUGHTS. TO MAKE THEM MY CHILDREN.
BUT I COULDN'T BEAR THE DEAD PLAINS OF MARS. I NEEDED A HOME.
I NEEDED A WORLD RICH WITH LIFE. A WORLD I COULD PRUNE AND NURTURE INTO HARMONY.
AND THAT WORLD IS HERE!
JOIN ME, BROTHER! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAME ACROSS SPACE AND TIME TO FIND YOURSELF HERE -- BUT IT CAN'T BE ACCIDENT!
DESTINY BROUGHT YOU! DESTINY PLACED YOU AMONG EARTHLINGS, SO THAT YOU COULD UNDERSTAND THEIR SOULS BETTER THAN I!
HELP ME SAVE OUR NEW CHILDREN! FROM THEMSELVES! HELP ME GIVE BIRTH -- TO A NEW RACE REGAINED!

I KNOW YOUR PAIN, BROTHER.
BUT I WON'T PERVERT A WORLD TO ERASE IT.
YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR SOULS TOO WELL! YOU BELIEVE WHAT THEY BELIEVE!
FORGET WHAT EARTH HAS TAUGHT YOU!
REMEMBER MARS!
MARS IS DEAD.
NEVER!
TROOPS! STOP HIM!
NO!

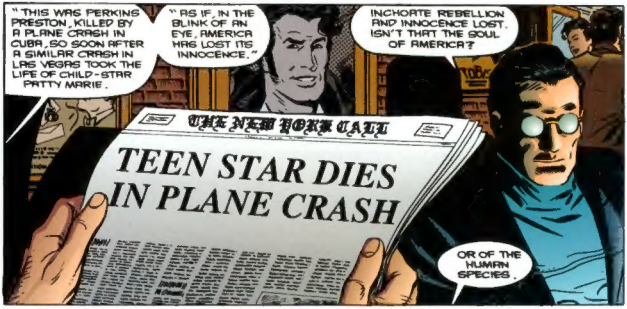
NOT THE FIRE! NOT THE FIRE!
BUT MASTER... THE FIRE DOESN'T HURT LIAR!
DO YOU HEAR THAT... BROTHER?
THE FIRE... DOESN'T HURT... "LIES."
HEH-HEH... HEH-HEH
HEHHHHH
FIRE.

MY FUNERAL PYRE.
BUT LET ME NOT DIE ALONE

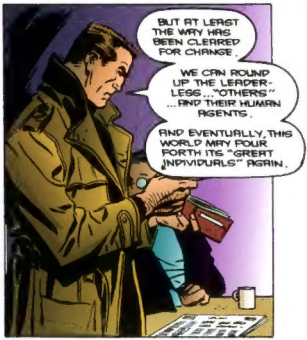
ALL JETS--
--ALL FORCES--
--THIS IS THE MASTER!

CEASE WHAT YOU'RE DOING
ASK NO QUESTIONS
BOMB THE VALLEY!
BOMB THE VALLEY!

I HEAR THROUGH THE FLAMES THE WAILING OF MY FAMILY.
THEN NOT THAT, BUT A DEEPER SOUND
THE THUNDER OF BOMBS.
I AM LIFTED AND CARRIED AWAY, BY THE FIRE-GOD, I THINK, TO HIS PARLOR OF RED DEATH
BUT IT'S THE CHAOS I FEEL. SO COOL. SO DARK
IT CALLS TO ME STRANGELY.
" AN INCHOATE VOICE OF REBELLION AND TRUTH, SILENCED BEFORE IT COULD FIND ITS MESSAGE "


"THIS WAS PERKINS PRESTON, KILLED BY A PLANE CRASH IN CUBA. SO SOON AFTER A SIMILAR CRASH IN LAS VEGAS TOOK THE LIFE OF CHILD-STAR PATTY MARIE.
"AS IF, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, AMERICA HAS LOST ITS INNOCENCE."
INCHOATE REBELLION AND INNOCENCE LOST. ISN'T THAT THE SOUL OF AMERICA?
THE NEW YORK CALL
TEEN STAR DIES IN PLANE CRASH
OR OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

IF YOU SAY SO.
I SUPPOSE WE WON'T BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE TRUTH BEHIND RECENT EVENTS FOR A LONG TIME.
SO LONG AS OUR NERVOUS SYSTEMS ARE STILL BEARING OUR LITTLE..."GUESTS"...IT'LL BE DANGEROUS TO LOOK TOO DIRECTLY AT WHAT HAPPENED.


BUT AT LEAST THE WAY HAS BEEN CLEARED FOR CHANGE.
WE CAN ROUND UP THE LEADER-LESS..."OTHERS"...AND THEIR HUMAN AGENTS.
AND EVENTUALLY, THIS WORLD MAY POUR FORTH ITS "GREAT INDIVIDUALS" AGAIN.

...WHEREVER MEN ARE A-FIGHTIN' FOR THEIR RIGHTS, THAT'S WHERE I'M GONNA BE, MA...
"WE."
THEN WE CAN REMAKE THE EARTH AS WE WANT IT TO BE.

"I HAVE TO ASK YOU, JONES, WHEN THE ONLY OTHER SURVIVOR OF YOUR WORLD WAITED HELP CREATINGS AN ANTIMATTER OF THAT WORLD... WEREN'T YOU TEMPTED?"
"I MIGHT HAVE BEEN, McNIDER. UNTIL THAT MOMENT IN THE DESERT, WHEN I WAS TRULY ALONE, AND I COULD FINALLY SEE THE TRUTH.
"BY THE TIME I MET HIM McNIDER, HE AND I WERE STRANGERS TO EACH OTHER.
"YOU SEE, HE WAS A MARTIAN, I'M A BEATNIK."
EDUARDO BARRETO FERNANDEZ

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"I walk forever alone.

A stranger among strangers, I accept that as my fate, my burden. For all of that, I have never been this alone...a speck in the desert, blood on the snow. With the big burning eye of the world looking down on me, is there anywhere left to run?"

Somewhere out there is the truth—the answers to a great and complex conspiracy to destroy America, and detective John Jones will find it. Recognizing it will be difficult; nothing is what it seems. Searching within and without, he has followed ever-elusive clues across the vast nation, and finally to the troubled Caribbean island of Cuba.

Amidst the decadence of the island's last free days and an atmosphere of impending doom, John, in his guise as the Martian Manhunter, must walk a terrifying path to the senses-shattering conclusion of the mystery he pursues.

As he tracks his quarry, the only things the Martian truly knows is that he will not give up... and that he will go on alone.